

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8071

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

US MISSION USUN NY 2051

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 12823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. ALTHOUGH GOI OFFICIALS HAVE NOT RAISED THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT WITH US, THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MENTIONED IT DURING THE COURTESY CALLS OF THE NEW ROK AMBASSADOR. DURING AMBASSADOR BUM SUK LEE'S INITIAL CALL ON MRS. GANDHI, AUGUST 27, THE PRIME MINISTER, REFERRING TO PANMUNJOM, REGRETTED THERE WAS ALWAYS TENSION IN SOME PART OF THE WORLD. SHE SAID QUOTE AT ANY RATE, THEY DID NOT HAVE TO KILL THE MEN END QUOTE. MRS. GANDHI WAS SYMPATHETIC TO LEE'S BID FOR INDIAN SUPPORT IN THE UNITED NATIONS, BUT SHE MADE NO COMMITMENT.

2. THE INCIDENT WAS DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY, ON AUGUST 26, WHEN AMBASSADOR LEE CALLED ON CHAVAN WHO BELIEVED THAT THE NORTH KOREAN EXPRESSION OF REGRET SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN APOLOGY. WHEN LEE ASKED THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR INDIAN SUPPORT AT THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAVAN SAID INDIAN WOULD DO WHAT IT CAN AT THE UN. ACCORDING TO THE KOREAN EMBASSY HERE, CHAVAN ALSO MADE A HIGHLY UNCOMPLIMENTARY REFERENCE

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TO KIM 11 SONG, CALLING HIM "THAT CRAZY MAN WHO WILL TRY

ANYTHING."

3. THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC REACTION IN INDIA. THE INCIDENT DID NOT STIMULATE ANY QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT. THE PRESS CARRIED OBJECTIVE REPORTS OF THE ORIGINAL EVENT AND ENSUING ACTIONS. EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS BEEN SPARSE CRITICAL OF BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA IN THE NON-COMMUNIST PRESS, AND PREDICTABLY CRITICAL OF THE US IN THE CPI ORGANS.

4. COMMENT: NORMALLY, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THE GOI TO BE EXERCISED OVER A BORDER INCIDENT IN KOREA. THE STAKES AND HAZARDS OF PATROL ACTIVITY ARE TOO WELL KNOWN IN INDIA. WE ARE SOMEWHAT SURPRISED AND ENCOURAGED, THEREFORE, BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS TO THE ROK AMBASSADOR. THE ROK EMBASSY BELIEVES THE INDIANS WILL BE MORE FORTHCOMING AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AND CITE AN ADDITIONAL REMARK BY CHAVAN THAT HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO MEET THE ROK FOREIGN MINISTER IN NEW YORK, AS ADDITIONAL PROOF OF A MORE RESPONSIVE GOI POSITION.
SAXBE

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